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Personality  
and Learning

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Practice



## Part 2

# Individual Behaviour





## Chapter 2

# Personality and Learning

### Learning Objectives

After reading Chapter 2, you should be able to:

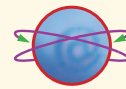
- 1 Define *personality* and discuss its general role in influencing organizational behaviour.
- 2 Describe the dispositional, situational, and interactionist approach to organizational behaviour.
- 3 Discuss the Five-Factor Model of personality.
- 4 Discuss the consequences of *locus of control*, *self-monitoring*, and *self-esteem*.
- 5 Discuss *positive* and *negative affectivity*, *proactive personality*, *general self-efficacy*, and *core self-evaluations*.
- 6 Define *learning* and describe what is learned in organizations.
- 7 Explain *operant learning* theory and differentiate between *positive* and *negative reinforcements*.
- 8 Explain when to use immediate versus delayed reinforcement and when to use continuous versus partial reinforcement.
- 9 Distinguish between *extinction* and *punishment* and explain how to use punishment effectively.
- 10 Explain social learning theory.
- 11 Describe the various organizational learning practices.

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The ongoing success of Motorola can be partly credited to a company culture that encourages formal and informal learning.

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Learning is a critical requirement for effective organizational behaviour, and as you have probably heard, in order for organizations to remain competitive in today's rapidly changing environment, employee learning must be continuous and life-long. As you can tell from the opening vignette, this is something that Motorola has clearly mastered. But how has Motorola created a "learning organization" in which formal training and informal learning have become a regular part of employees' worklife? In this chapter we will focus on the learning process and see how effective learning in organizations can be encouraged. While learning is necessary for the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and behaviours, studies in organizational behaviour have shown that behaviour is also a function of people's personalities. Therefore, we begin this chapter by considering personality and organizational behaviour.

## What Is Personality?

The notion of personality permeates thought and discussion in our culture. We are bombarded with information about "personalities" in the print and broadcast media. We are sometimes promised exciting introductions to people with "nice" personalities. We occasionally meet people who seem to have "no personality." But exactly what *is* personality?

**Personality.** The relatively stable set of psychological characteristics that influences the way an individual interacts with his or her environment.

**Personality** is the relatively stable set of psychological characteristics that influences the way an individual interacts with his or her environment. An individual's personality summarizes his or her personal style of dealing with the world. You have certainly noticed differences in personal style on the part of your parents, friends, professors, bosses, and employees. It is reflected in the distinctive way that they react to people, situations, and problems.

Where does personality come from? Personality consists of a number of dimensions and traits that are determined in a complex way by genetic predisposition and by one's long-term learning history. Although personality is relatively stable, it is certainly susceptible to change through adult learning experiences. And while we often use labels such as "high self-esteem" to describe people, we should always remember that people have a *variety* of personality characteristics. Excessive typing of people does not help us to appreciate their unique potential to contribute to an organization.

## Personality and Organizational Behaviour

Personality has a rather long and rocky history in organizational behaviour. Initially, it was believed that personality was an important factor in many areas of organizational behaviour including motivation, attitudes, performance, and leadership. In fact, after World War II the use of personality tests for the selection of military personnel became widespread, and in the 1950s and 1960s it became popular in business organizations. This approach to organizational behaviour is known as the "dispositional approach" because it focuses on individual dispositions and personality. According to the dispositional approach, individuals possess stable traits or characteristics that influence their attitudes and behaviours. In other words, individuals are predisposed to behave in certain ways. However, decades of research produced mixed and inconsistent findings that failed to support the usefulness of personality as a predictor of organizational behaviour and job performance. As a result, there was a dramatic decrease in personality research and a decline in the use of personality tests for selection. Researchers began to shift their attention to factors in the work environment that might predict and explain organizational behaviour. This approach became known as the "situational approach." According to the situational approach, characteristics of the organizational setting such as rewards and



punishment influence people's feelings, attitudes, and behaviour. For example, many studies have shown that job satisfaction and other work-related attitudes are largely determined by situational factors such as the characteristics of work tasks.<sup>2</sup>

Over the years, proponents of both approaches have argued about the importance of dispositions versus the situation in what is known as the "person–situation debate." While researchers argued over which approach is the right one, it is now believed that both approaches are important for predicting and understanding organizational behaviour. This led to a third approach to organizational behaviour that is known as the "interactionist approach" or "interactionism." According to the interactionist approach, organizational behaviour is a function of both dispositions and the situation. In other words, in order to predict and understand organizational behaviour, one must know something about an individual's personality and the setting in which he or she works. This approach is now the most widely accepted perspective within organizational behaviour.<sup>3</sup>

To give you an example of the interactionist perspective, consider the role of personality in different situations. To keep it simple, we will describe situations as being either "weak" or "strong." In weak situations it is not always clear how a person should behave, while in strong situations there are clear expectations for appropriate behaviour. As a result, personality has the most impact in weak situations. This is because in these situations (e.g., a newly formed volunteer community organization) there are loosely defined roles, few rules, and weak reinforcement and punishment contingencies. However, in strong situations which have more defined roles, rules, and contingencies (e.g., routine military operations), personality tends to have less impact.<sup>4</sup> Thus, as you can see, the extent to which personality influences people's attitudes and behaviour depends on the situation. Later in the text you will learn that the extent to which stressors are perceived as stressful as well as the way that people react to stress is influenced by one's personality. This is another example of the interactionist approach to organizational behaviour.

One of the most important implications of the interactionist perspective is that some personality characteristics are useful in certain organizational situations. Thus, there is no one best personality, and managers need to appreciate the advantages of employee diversity. A key concept here is *fit*: putting the right person in the right job, group, or organization and exposing different employees to different management styles.

In recent years, there has been a resurgence of interest in personality research in organizational behaviour. One of the main problems with the early research on personality was the use of inadequate measures of personality characteristics. However, advances in measurement and trends in organizations have prompted renewed interest. For example, increased emphasis on service jobs with customer contact, concern about ethics and integrity, and contemporary interest in teamwork and cooperation all point to the potential contribution of personality.<sup>5</sup>

Another reason for the renewed interest in personality has been the development of a framework of personality characteristics known as the Five-Factor Model or the "Big Five," which provides a framework for classifying personality characteristics into five general dimensions. This framework makes it much easier to understand and study the role of personality in organizational behaviour.<sup>6</sup>

In what follows, we first discuss the five general personality dimensions of the Five-Factor Model. Then we cover three well-known personality characteristics with special relevance to organizational behaviour. We then discuss recent developments in personality research. Later in the text, we will explore the impact of personality characteristics on job satisfaction, motivation, ethics, organizational politics, and stress.

## The Five-Factor Model of Personality

People are unique, people are complex, and there are literally hundreds of adjectives that we can use to reflect this unique complexity. Yet, over the years, psychologists have discovered that there are about five basic but general dimensions that describe personality. These “Big Five” dimensions are known as the Five-Factor Model (FFM) of personality and are summarized in Exhibit 2.1 along with some illustrative traits.<sup>7</sup> The dimensions are:

- *Extraversion*—this is the extent to which a person is outgoing versus shy. High extraverts enjoy social situations, while those low on this dimension (introverts) avoid them.
- *Emotional stability/Neuroticism*—the degree to which a person has appropriate emotional control. People with high emotional stability (low neuroticism) are self-confident and have high self-esteem. Those with lower emotional stability (high neuroticism) tend toward self-doubt and depression.
- *Agreeableness*—the extent to which a person is friendly and approachable. More agreeable people are warm and considerate. Less agreeable people tend to be cold and aloof.
- *Conscientiousness*—the degree to which a person is responsible and achievement oriented. More conscientious people are dependable and positively motivated. Less conscientious people are unreliable.
- *Openness to experience*—the extent to which a person thinks flexibly and is receptive to new ideas. More open people tend toward creativity and innovation. Less open people favour the status quo.

These dimensions are relatively independent. That is, you could be higher or lower in any combination of dimensions. Also, they tend to hold up well cross-culturally. Thus, people in different cultures use these same dimensions when describing the personalities of friends and acquaintances. There is also evidence that the “Big Five” traits have a genetic basis.<sup>8</sup>

Research has linked these personality dimensions to organizational behaviour. First, there is evidence that each of the “Big Five” dimensions is related to job performance.<sup>9</sup> Generally, traits like those in the top half of Exhibit 2.1 lead to better job performance. One review found that high extraversion was important for managers and salespeople and that high conscientiousness facilitated performance for all occupations. In fact, conscientiousness has been found to be the strongest predictor of all of the “Big Five” dimensions of overall job performance.<sup>10</sup> And in support of the interactionist approach, one study showed that high conscientiousness and extraversion contributed more to managerial performance for managers who had more autonomy in the way they handled their jobs.<sup>11</sup>

Second, research has also found that the “Big Five” are related to other work behaviours. For example, one study showed that conscientiousness is related to retention and attendance at work and is also an important antidote for counterproductive behaviours such as theft, absenteeism, and disciplinary problems.<sup>12</sup>

**Exhibit 2.1**  
The Five-Factor Model of Personality.

Extraversion	Emotional Stability	Agreeableness	Conscientiousness	Openness to Experience
Sociable, Talkative vs. Withdrawn, Shy	Stable, Confident vs. Depressed, Anxious	Tolerant, Cooperative vs. Cold, Rude	Dependable, Responsible vs. Careless, Impulsive	Curious, Original vs. Dull, Unimaginative

Extraversion has also been found to be related to absenteeism, but in a positive direction. In other words, extraverts tend to be absent more often than introverts.<sup>13</sup>

The “Big Five” are also related to work motivation and job satisfaction. In a study that investigated the relationship between the “Big Five” and different indicators of work motivation, the “Big Five” were found to be significantly related to motivation. Among the five dimensions, neuroticism and conscientiousness were found to be the strongest predictors of motivation, with the former being negatively related and the latter being positively related.<sup>14</sup> In another study, the “Big Five” were shown to be significantly related to job satisfaction. The strongest predictor was neuroticism (i.e., emotional stability) followed by conscientiousness, extraversion, and to a lesser extent, agreeableness. Openness to experience was not related to job satisfaction. Higher neuroticism was associated with lower job satisfaction, while higher extraversion, conscientiousness, and agreeableness were associated with higher job satisfaction. Similar results have been found for life satisfaction.<sup>15</sup>

The “Big Five” have also been shown to be related to job search behaviours and career success. For example, extraversion, conscientiousness, openness to experience, and agreeableness were found to relate positively to the intensity of job seekers’ job search, while neuroticism was negatively related. As well, conscientiousness was found to be positively related to the probability of obtaining employment.<sup>16</sup> In addition, high conscientiousness and extraversion and low neuroticism (i.e., emotional stability) have been found to be associated with a higher income and occupational status. Perhaps most interesting is the fact that these personality traits were related to career success even when the influence of general mental ability has been taken into account. Furthermore, both childhood and adult measures of personality predicted career success during adulthood over a period of 50 years. These results suggest that the effects of personality on career success are relatively enduring.<sup>17</sup> Finally, the “Big Five” are also related to vocational interests and preferences. In particular, extraversion is related to an enterprising and social vocational orientation, and openness to experience is related to an artistic and investigative vocational orientation.<sup>18</sup>

As noted earlier, the “Big Five” personality dimensions are basic and general. However, years of research have also identified a number of more specific personality characteristics that influence organizational behaviour, including locus of control, self-monitoring, and self-esteem.

## Locus of Control

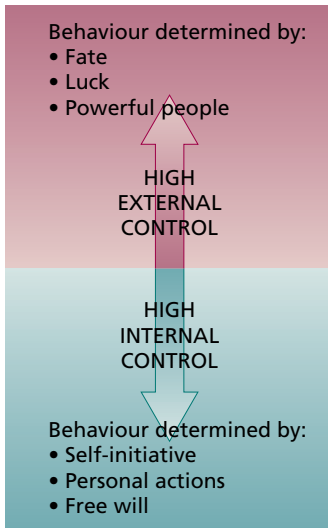
Consider the following comparison. Laurie and Stan are both management trainees in large banks. However, they have rather different expectations regarding their futures. Laurie has just enrolled in an evening Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.) program in a nearby university. Although some of her M.B.A. courses are not immediately applicable to her job, Laurie feels that she must be prepared for greater responsibility as she moves up in the bank hierarchy. Laurie is convinced that she will achieve promotions because she studies hard, works hard, and does her job properly. She feels that an individual makes her own way in the world, and that she can control her own destiny. She is certain that she can someday be the president of the bank if she really wants to be. Her personal motto is: “I can do it.”

Stan, on the other hand, sees no use in pursuing additional education beyond his bachelor’s degree. According to him, such activities just do not pay off. People who get promoted are just plain lucky or have special connections, and further academic preparation or hard work has nothing to do with it. Stan feels that it is impossible to predict his own future but knows that the world is pretty unfair.

Laurie and Stan differ on a personality dimension called **locus of control**. This variable refers to individuals’ beliefs about the *location* of the factors that control their behaviour. At one end of the continuum are high internals (like Laurie) who believe that the opportunity to control their own behaviour rests within themselves.

**Locus of control.** A set of beliefs about whether one’s behaviour is controlled mainly by internal or external forces.





**Exhibit 2.2**  
The internal/external locus of control continuum.

**Self-monitoring.** The extent to which people observe and regulate how they appear and behave in social settings and relationships.

At the other end of the continuum are high externals (like Stan) who believe that external forces determine their behaviour. Not surprisingly, compared with internals, externals see the world as an unpredictable, chancy place in which luck, fate, or powerful people control their destinies.<sup>19</sup> (See Exhibit 2.2.)

Internals tend to see stronger links between the effort they put into their jobs and the performance level that they achieve. In addition, they perceive to a greater degree than externals that the organization will notice high performance and reward it.<sup>20</sup> Since internals believe that their work behaviour will influence the rewards they achieve, they are more likely to be aware of and to take advantage of information that will enable them to perform effectively.<sup>21</sup>

Research shows that locus of control influences organizational behaviour in a variety of occupational settings. Evidently, because they perceive themselves as being able to control what happens to them, people who are high on internal control are more satisfied with their jobs, earn more money, and achieve higher organizational positions.<sup>22</sup> In addition, they seem to perceive less stress, to cope with stress better, and to engage in more careful career planning.<sup>23</sup>

## Self-Monitoring

We are sure that you have known people who tend to “wear their hearts on their sleeves.” These are people who act the way they feel and say what they think in spite of their social surroundings. We are also sure that you have known people who are a lot more sensitive to their social surroundings, a lot more likely to fit what they say and do to the nature of those surroundings, regardless of how they think or feel. What we have here is a contrast in **self-monitoring**, which is the extent to which people observe and regulate how they appear and behave in social settings and relationships.<sup>24</sup> The people who “wear their hearts on their sleeves” are low self-monitors. They are not so concerned with scoping out and fitting in with those around them. Their opposites are high self-monitors who take great care to observe and control the images that they project. In this sense, high self-monitors behave somewhat like actors. In particular, high self-monitors tend to show concern for socially appropriate behaviour, to tune in to social cues, and to regulate their behaviour according to these cues.

How does self-monitoring affect organizational behaviour?<sup>25</sup> For one thing, high self-monitors might tend to gravitate toward jobs that require, by their nature, a degree of role-playing. Sales, law, public relations, and politics are examples. In such jobs, ability to adapt to one’s clients and contacts is critical; so are communication skills and persuasive abilities, characteristics that high self-monitors frequently exhibit. A number of studies show that managers are inclined to be higher self-monitors than nonmanagers in the same organization. Promotion in the management ranks is often a function of subjective performance appraisals, and the ability to read and conform to the boss’s expectations can be critical for advancement. In a study that tracked the careers of a sample of Master’s of Business Administration graduates, high self-monitors were more likely to change employers and locations and to receive more promotions than low self-monitors. Thus, the ability to regulate and adapt one’s behaviour in social situations and to manage the impressions others form of them appears to be a career advantage for high self-monitors.<sup>26</sup>

Are high self-monitors always at an organizational advantage? Not likely. They are unlikely to feel comfortable in ambiguous social settings in which it is hard to determine exactly what behaviours are socially appropriate. Dealing with unfamiliar cultures (national or corporate) might provoke stress. Also, some roles require people to go against the grain or really stand up for what they truly believe in. Thus, high self-monitoring types would seem to be weak innovators and would have difficulty resisting social pressure.

## Self-Esteem

How well do you like yourself? This is the essence of the personality characteristic called self-esteem. More formally, **self-esteem** is the degree to which a person has a positive self-evaluation. People with high self-esteem have favourable self-images. People with low self-esteem have unfavourable self-images. They also tend to be uncertain about the correctness of their opinions, attitudes, and behaviours. In general, people tend to be highly motivated to protect themselves from threats to their self-esteem.

One of the most interesting differences between people with high and low self-esteem has to do with the *plasticity* of their thoughts and behaviour or what is known as “behavioural plasticity.” According to **behavioural plasticity theory**, people with low self-esteem tend to be more susceptible to external and social influences than those who have high self-esteem—that is, they are more pliable. Thus, events and people in the organizational environment have more impact on the beliefs and actions of employees with low self-esteem. This occurs because, being unsure of their own views and behaviour, they are more likely to look to others for information and confirmation. In addition, people who have low self-esteem seek social approval from others, approval that they might gain from adopting others’ views, and they do not react well to ambiguous and stressful situations. This is another example of interactionism in that the effect of the work environment on people’s beliefs and actions is partly a function of their self-esteem.<sup>27</sup>

Employees with low self-esteem also tend to react badly to negative feedback—it lowers their subsequent performance.<sup>28</sup> This means that managers should be especially cautious when using negative reinforcement and punishment, as discussed later in this chapter, with employees with low self-esteem. If external causes are thought to be responsible for a performance problem, this should be made very clear. Also, managers should direct criticism at the performance difficulty and not at the person. As we will explain shortly, modelling the correct behaviour should be especially effective with employees with low self-esteem who are quite willing to imitate credible models and also respond well to mentoring. Finally, organizations should try to avoid assigning those with low self-esteem to jobs (such as life insurance sales) that inherently provide a lot of negative feedback.

Organizations will generally benefit from a workforce with high self-esteem. Such people tend to make more fulfilling career decisions, they exhibit higher job satisfaction and job performance, and they are generally more resilient to the strains of everyday worklife.<sup>29</sup> What can organizations do to bolster self-esteem? Opportunity for participation in decision making, autonomy, and interesting work have been fairly consistently found to be positively correlated with self-esteem.<sup>30</sup> Also, organizations should avoid creating a culture with excessive and petty work rules that signal to employees that they are incompetent or untrustworthy.<sup>31</sup>

**Self-esteem.** The degree to which a person has a positive self-evaluation.

**Behavioural plasticity theory.** People with low self-esteem tend to be more susceptible to external and social influences than those who have high self-esteem.

## Recent Developments in Personality and Organizational Behaviour

In recent years, there has been a number of exciting developments in personality research in organizational behaviour. In this section, we briefly review five personality variables that have been found to be important for organizational behaviour: positive and negative affectivity, proactive personality, general self-efficacy, and core self-evaluations.

**Positive and Negative Affectivity.** Have you ever known somebody who is always happy, cheerful, and in a good mood? Or perhaps you know someone who is always unhappy and in a bad mood. Chances are you have noticed these differences in people. Some people are happy most of the time, while others are almost always unhappy. These differences reflect two affective dispositions known as positive

**Positive affectivity.** Propensity to the view world, including one-self and other people, in a positive light.

**Negative affectivity.** Propensity to the view world, including one-self and other people, in a negative light.

**Proactive personality.** A stable personal disposition that reflects a tendency to behave proactively and to effect positive change in one's environment.

**General self-efficacy.** A general trait that refers to an individual's belief in his or her ability to perform successfully in a variety of challenging situations.

**Core self-evaluations.** A broad personality concept that consists of more specific traits that reflect the evaluations people hold about themselves and their self-worth.

affectivity (PA) and negative affectivity (NA). Research has found that they are enduring personality characteristics and that there might be a genetic and biological basis to them.

People who are high on **positive affectivity** experience positive emotions and moods and view the world in a positive light including oneself and other people. They tend to be cheerful, enthusiastic, lively, sociable, and energetic. People who are high on **negative affectivity** experience negative emotions and moods and view the world in a negative light. They have an overall negative view of themselves and the world around them and they tend to be distressed, depressed, and unhappy.<sup>32</sup>

Unlike the other personality traits discussed in this chapter, positive and negative affectivity are emotional dispositions that predict people's general emotional tendencies. Thus, they can influence people's emotions and mood states at work and influence job attitudes and work behaviour. Research on affective dispositions in organizational behaviour has found that people who are high on PA report higher job satisfaction while those high on NA report lower job satisfaction. There is also some evidence that PA is positively related to job performance, and NA is negatively related. As well, people who have high NA tend to experience more stressful conditions at work and report higher levels of workplace stress and strain.<sup>33</sup>

**Proactive Personality.** How effective are you at changing and influencing your circumstances? Some people are actually better at this than others because they have a stable disposition toward proactive behaviour, known as a "proactive personality." Individuals who have a **proactive personality** are relatively unconstrained by situational forces and act to change and influence their environment. Proactive personality is a stable personal disposition that reflects a tendency to behave proactively and to effect positive change in one's environment.<sup>34</sup>

Proactive individuals search for and identify opportunities, show initiative, take action, and persevere until they bring about meaningful change. People who do not have a proactive personality are more likely to be passive and to react and adapt to their environment. As a result, they tend to endure and to be shaped by the environment instead of trying to change it.<sup>35</sup> Proactive personality has been found to be related to a number of work outcomes, including job performance, tolerance for stress in demanding jobs, leadership effectiveness, participation in organizational initiatives, work team performance, and entrepreneurship. There is also evidence that persons with a proactive personality have greater career success in terms of higher salaries, more frequent promotions, and more satisfying careers.<sup>36</sup>

**General Self-Efficacy.** **General self-efficacy** (GSE) is a general trait that refers to an individual's belief in his or her ability to perform successfully in a variety of challenging situations.<sup>37</sup> GSE is considered to be a *motivational* trait rather than an *affective* trait because it reflects an individual's belief that he or she can succeed at a variety of tasks rather than how an individual feels about him or herself. An individual's GSE is believed to develop over the life span as repeated successes and failures are experienced across a variety of tasks and situations. Thus, if you have experienced many successes in your life, you probably have high GSE, whereas somebody who has experienced many failures probably has low GSE. Individuals who are high on GSE are better able to adapt to novel, uncertain, and adverse situations. In addition, employees with higher GSE have higher job satisfaction and job performance.<sup>38</sup>

**Core Self-Evaluations.** Unlike the other personality characteristics described in this chapter, which are specific in themselves, **core self-evaluations** refers to a broad personality concept that consists of more specific traits. The idea behind the theory of core self-evaluations is that individuals hold evaluations about themselves and their self-worth.<sup>39</sup> In a review of the personality literature, Timothy Judge, Edwin

Locke, and Cathy Durham identified four traits that make up a person's core self-evaluation. The four traits have already been described in this chapter and include self-esteem, general self-efficacy, locus of control, and neuroticism (emotional stability). Research on core self-evaluations has found that these traits are among the best dispositional predictors of job satisfaction and job performance. People with more positive self-evaluations have higher job satisfaction and job performance. Furthermore, research has shown that core self-evaluations measured in childhood and in early adulthood are related to job satisfaction in middle adulthood. This suggests that core self-evaluations are related to job satisfaction over time. Core self-evaluations have also been found to be positively related to life satisfaction.<sup>40</sup>

## What Is Learning?

So far in this chapter we have described how people's personality can influence their work attitudes and behaviours. However, recall our earlier discussion that people's experiences and the work environment also has a strong effect on attitudes and behaviour. As you will learn in this section, the environment can change people's behaviour and even shape personalities. To understand how this can happen, let us examine the concept of learning.

**Learning** occurs when practice or experience leads to a relatively permanent change in behaviour potential. The words *practice* or *experience* rule out viewing behavioural changes caused by factors like drug intake or biological maturation as learning. One does not learn to be relaxed after taking a tranquilizer, and a boy does not suddenly learn to be a bass singer at the age of 14. The practice or experience that prompts learning stems from an environment that gives feedback concerning the consequences of behaviour.

But what do employees learn in organizations? Learning in organizations can be understood in terms of taxonomies that indicate what employees learn, how they learn, and different types of learning experiences. The "what" aspect of learning can be described as learning content, of which there are four primary categories: practical skills, intrapersonal skills, interpersonal skills, and cultural awareness.<sup>41</sup>

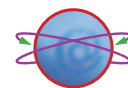
*Practical skills* include job-specific skills, knowledge, and technical competence. For example, at Motorola, employees learn new information and work techniques that are incorporated into their existing work routines. Employees frequently learn new skills and technologies to continually improve performance and to keep organizations competitive. Constant improvement has become a major goal in many organizations today, and training can give an organization a competitive advantage.<sup>42</sup>

*Intrapersonal skills* are skills such as problem solving, critical thinking, learning about alternative work processes, and risk taking. At Motorola, employees not only learn new technical skills, but they also figure out how new information and techniques can be incorporated into the existing work routine. Employees also change work processes to accommodate new ideas, and during shift changes they discuss probable causes and solutions to various problems.

*Interpersonal skills* include interactive skills such as communicating, teamwork, and conflict resolution. Later in this book, we will discuss the ways in which teams are becoming the major building blocks of organizations as well as the importance of effective communication for organizational success. As noted earlier, employees at Motorola frequently communicate with each other when implementing new technologies, and teams of employees work together to modify work processes. When General Motors opened a new team-based truck plant in Fort Wayne, Indiana, workers and management received intensive training in group problem solving and interpersonal dynamics.<sup>43</sup>

Finally, *cultural awareness* involves learning the social norms of organizations, understanding company goals, business operations, and company expectations and

**Learning.** A relatively permanent change in behaviour potential that occurs due to practice or experience.



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priorities. All employees need to learn the cultural norms and expectations of their organizations in order to function as effective organizational members. For an example of cultural awareness learning, see “Global Focus: *Fairmont Hotels and Resorts Goes Global*.”

Now that we have considered the content of learning in organizations, let us now turn to two theories that describe how people learn in organizations.

## Operant Learning Theory

In the 1930s, psychologist B. F. Skinner investigated the behaviour of rats confined in a box containing a lever that delivered food pellets when pulled. Initially, the rats

### GLOBAL FOCUS

#### Fairmont Hotels and Resorts Goes Global

William Cornelius Van Horne, the man who built the legendary Banff Springs hotel in 1888, summed up his ambition in a single sentence: “If we can’t export the scenery, we’ll import the tourists.” Van Horne was head of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company when the last spike of Canada’s first transcontinental train track was hammered into place. His strategy worked, and the Banff Springs flourished.

Canadian Pacific Hotels and Resorts has since built or bought other opulent resorts across Canada and in the United States. In October of 1999, the company acquired Fairmont Hotels, which led to the formation of Fairmont Hotels and Resorts. The Toronto-based company is now the largest luxury hotel management company in North America. In addition to offering luxurious accommodations in some of the most sought after destinations in the world, the company also owns many historic Canadian properties, including The Fairmont Royal York in Toronto, Quebec City’s Fairmont Le Chateau Frontenac, and Fairmont Chateau Laurier in Ottawa.

But as any Canadian knows, the northern climate has its limitations. Freezing temperatures and driving snow are generally bad for tourism. Bill Fatt knows. That’s why the chairman and CEO of Fairmont Hotels and Resorts has been on a mission to turn the company’s low season into a high one. He began by purchasing some scenery in the sunny spots of the south—namely, New York-based Princess Hotels International Inc., which owned seven resorts in the United States, Mexico, Bermuda, and Barbados. Fatt made it clear that while the history of the company is in Canada, its future lies beyond its borders.

All this sounds perfectly reasonable—which is probably why analysts loved the deal. There was, however, one problem. While the company has been enormously successful on its home turf, it now must export that success to countries with different histories and ways of working. That may be more of a challenge than Fatt thinks.

The Canadian hotelier has been working on exporting the company’s “culture,” including its emphasis on communication, to its southern resorts. Fatt believes his customers will receive better service if the rank and file in Mexico, Barbados, and elsewhere are indoctrinated with the Fairmont philosophy. “Three things are important in the hotel business,” he says. “Location, product and service. The Princess properties are in great locations, and the product, by and large, is good. We need to work on service.” The workers will go through a four-part program that involves training in customer service and recognition of outstanding work.

Despite Fatt’s optimism, it remains to be seen how successful that cultural integration will be. Work habits tend to be socially ingrained. It is not the sort of thing that can be changed with a 30-minute video. But they can try. Fatt believes a series of videos has “worked well to start a sense of employee motivation.”

However, when Four Seasons opened hotels in Indonesia, they found that training local staff was a major challenge due to training, communication, and cultural barriers. In fact, virtually none of the applicants spoke English, and many did not have any concept about world cuisine and western customs. Because of the culture-based differences, new hires had to be trained in the specifics of western culture as well as English and communication skills. This proved to be especially challenging because traditional corporate training methods that were geared to young Americans with a college education proved useless for the native workers. As a result, they had to find new ways to combine the training needs of the local culture with the high standards of the company’s corporate culture.

Sources: Excerpted from Verburg, P. (1999, February 12). New kid on the beach. *Canadian Business*, 52–56; Solomon, C. M. (1997, March). When training doesn’t translate. *Workforce*, 76(3), 40–43; and from [www.fairmont.com](http://www.fairmont.com)



ignored the lever, but at some point they would accidentally operate it and a pellet would appear. Over time, the rats gradually acquired the lever-pulling response as a means of obtaining food. In other words, they *learned* to pull the lever. The kind of learning Skinner studied is called **operant learning** because the subject learns to operate on the environment to achieve certain consequences. The rats learned to operate the lever to achieve food. Notice that operantly learned behaviour is controlled by the consequences that follow it. These consequences usually depend on the behaviour, and this connection is what is learned. For example, salespeople learn effective sales techniques to achieve commissions and avoid criticism from their managers. The consequences of commissions and criticism depend on which sales behaviours salespeople exhibit.

Operant learning can be used to increase the probability of desired behaviours and to reduce or eliminate the probability of undesirable behaviours. Let's now consider how this is done.

**Operant learning.** The subject learns to operate on the environment to achieve certain consequences.

## Increasing the Probability of Behaviour

One of the most important consequences that influences behaviour is reinforcement. **Reinforcement** is the process by which stimuli strengthen behaviours. Thus, a *reinforcer* is a stimulus that follows some behaviour and increases or maintains the probability of that behaviour. The sales commissions and criticism mentioned earlier are reinforcers. In each case, reinforcement serves to strengthen behaviours, such as proper sales techniques, that fulfill organizational goals. In general, organizations are interested in maintaining or increasing the probability of behaviours such as correct performance, prompt attendance, and accurate decision making. As we shall see, positive reinforcers work by their application to a situation, while negative reinforcers work by their removal from a situation.

**Reinforcement.** The process by which stimuli strengthen behaviours.

### Positive Reinforcement

**Positive reinforcement** increases or maintains the probability of some behaviour by the *application* or *addition* of a stimulus to the situation in question. Such a stimulus is a positive reinforcer. In the basic Skinnerian learning situation described earlier, we can assume that reinforcement occurred because the probability of the lever operation increased over time. We can further assume that the food pellets were positive reinforcers because they were introduced after the lever was pulled.

**Positive reinforcement.** The application or addition of a stimulus that increases or maintains the probability of some behaviour.

Consider the experienced securities analyst who tends to read a particular set of financial newspapers regularly. If we had been able to observe the development of this reading habit, we might have found that it occurred as the result of a series of successful business decisions. That is, the analyst learns to scan those papers because his or her reading is positively reinforced by subsequent successful decisions. In this example, something is added to the situation (favourable decisions) that increases the probability of certain behaviour (selective reading). Also, the appearance of the reinforcer is dependent or contingent on the occurrence of that behaviour.

In general, positive reinforcers tend to be pleasant things, such as food, praise, money, or business success. However, the intrinsic character of stimuli do not determine whether they are positive reinforcers, and pleasant stimuli are not positive reinforcers when considered in the abstract. Whether or not something is a positive reinforcer depends only on whether it increases or maintains the occurrence of some behaviour by its application. Thus, it is improbable that the Christmas turkey that employers give to all the employees of a manufacturing plant positively reinforces anything. The only behaviour which the receipt of the turkey is contingent on is being employed by the company during the third week of December. It is unlikely that the turkey increases the probability that employees will remain for another year or work harder.

**Negative reinforcement.** The removal of a stimulus that, in turn, increases or maintains the probability of some behaviour.

## Negative Reinforcement

**Negative reinforcement** increases or maintains the probability of some behaviour by the *removal* of a stimulus from the situation in question. Also, negative reinforcement occurs when a response *prevents* some event or stimulus from occurring. In each case, the removed or prevented stimulus is a *negative reinforcer*. Negative reinforcers are usually aversive or unpleasant stimuli, and it stands to reason that we will learn to repeat behaviours that remove or prevent these stimuli.

Let us repeat this point because it frequently confuses students of organizational behaviour: Negative reinforcers *increase* the probability of behaviour. Suppose we rig a cage with an electrified floor so that it provides a mild shock to its inhabitant. In addition, we install a lever that will turn off the electricity. On the first few trials, a rat put in the cage will become very upset when shocked. Sooner or later, however, it will accidentally operate the lever and turn off the current. Gradually, the rat will learn to operate the lever as soon as it feels the shock. The shock serves as a negative reinforcer for the lever pulling, increasing the probability of the behaviour by its removal.

Managers who continually nag their employees unless they work hard are attempting to use negative reinforcement. The only way employees can stop the aversive nagging is to work hard and be diligent. The nagging maintains the probability of productive responses by its removal. In this situation, employees often get pretty good at anticipating the onset of nagging by the look on the boss's face. This look serves as a signal that they can avoid the nagging altogether if they work harder.

Negative reinforcers generally tend to be unpleasant things, such as shock, nagging, or threat of fines. Again, however, negative reinforcers are defined only by what they do and how they work, not by their unpleasantness. Above, we indicated that nagging could serve as a negative reinforcer to increase the probability of productive responses. However, nagging could also serve as a positive reinforcer to increase the probability of unproductive responses if an employee has a need for attention and nagging is the only attention the manager provides. In the first case, nagging is a negative reinforcer—it is terminated following productive responses. In the second case, nagging is a positive reinforcer—it is applied following unproductive responses. In both cases, the responses increase in probability.

## Organizational Errors Involving Reinforcement

Experience indicates that managers sometimes make errors in trying to use reinforcement. The most common errors are confusing rewards with reinforcers, neglecting diversity in preferences for reinforcers, and neglecting important sources of reinforcement.

**Confusing Rewards with Reinforcers.** Organizations and individual managers frequently “reward” workers with things such as pay, promotions, fringe benefits, paid vacations, overtime work, and the opportunity to perform challenging tasks. Such rewards can fail to serve as reinforcers, however, because organizations do not make them contingent on specific behaviours that are of interest to the organization, such as attendance, innovation, or productivity. For example, many organizations assign overtime work on the basis of seniority, rather than performance or good attendance, even when the union contract does not require it. Although the opportunity to earn extra money might have strong potential as a reinforcer, it is seldom made contingent on some desired behaviour.

**Neglecting Diversity in Preferences for Reinforcers.** Organizations often fail to appreciate individual differences in preferences for reinforcers. In this case, even if managers administer rewards after a desired behaviour, they might fail to

have a reinforcing effect. Intuitively, it seems questionable to reinforce a workaholic's extra effort with time off from work, yet such a strategy is fairly common. A more appropriate reinforcer might be the assignment of some challenging task, such as work on a very demanding key project. Some labour contracts include clauses that dictate that supervisors assign overtime to the workers who have the greatest seniority. Not surprisingly, high-seniority workers are often the best paid and the least in need of the extra pay available through overtime. Even if it is administered so that the best-performing high-seniority workers get the overtime, such a strategy might not prove reinforcing—the usual time off might be preferred over extra money.

Managers should carefully explore the possible range of stimuli under their control (such as task assignment and time off from work) for their applicability as reinforcers for particular employees. Furthermore, organizations should attempt to administer their formal rewards (such as pay and promotions) to capitalize on their reinforcing effects for various individuals.

**Neglecting Important Sources of Reinforcement.** There are many reinforcers of organizational behaviour that are not especially obvious. While concentrating on potential reinforcers of a formal nature, such as pay or promotions, organizations and their managers often neglect those which are administered by co-workers or intrinsic to the jobs being performed. Many managers cannot understand why a worker would persist in potentially dangerous horseplay despite threats of a pay penalty or dismissal. Frequently, such activity is positively reinforced by the attention provided by the joker's co-workers. In fact, on a particularly boring job, even such threats might act as positive reinforcers for horseplay by relieving the boredom, especially if the threats are never carried out.

One very important source of reinforcement that managers often ignore is that which accompanies the successful performance of tasks: *feedback*. This reinforcement is available on jobs that provide feedback concerning the adequacy of performance. On some jobs, feedback contingent on performance is readily available. Doctors can observe the success of their treatment by observing the progress of their patients' health, and mechanics can take the cars they repair for a test drive. In other cases, organizations must design some special feedback mechanism into the job. Managers should understand that positive feedback and a "pat on the back" for a job well done is a positive reinforcer that is easy to administer and is likely to reinforce desirable behaviour.

## Reinforcement Strategies

What is the best way to administer reinforcers? Should we apply a reinforcer immediately after the behaviour of interest occurs, or should we wait for some period of time? Should we reinforce every correct behaviour, or should we reinforce only a portion of correct responses?

To obtain the *fast acquisition* of some response, continuous and immediate reinforcement should be used—that is, the reinforcer should be applied every time the behaviour of interest occurs, and it should be applied without delay after each occurrence. Many conditions exist, in which the fast acquisition of responses is desirable. These include correcting the behaviour of "problem" employees, training employees for emergency operations, and dealing with unsafe work behaviours. Consider the otherwise excellent performer who tends to be late for work. Under pressure to demote or fire this good worker, the boss might sensibly attempt to positively reinforce instances of prompt attendance with compliments and encouragement. To modify the employee's behaviour as quickly as possible, the supervisor might station herself near the office door each morning to supply these reinforcers regularly and immediately.

You might wonder when one would not want to use a continuous, immediate reinforcement strategy to mould organizational behaviour. Put simply, behaviour that individuals learn under such conditions tends not to persist when reinforcement is made less frequently or stopped. Intuitively, this should not be surprising. For example, under normal conditions, operating the power switch on your stereo system is continuously and immediately reinforced by music. If the system develops a short circuit and fails to produce music, your switch-operating behaviour will cease very quickly. In the example in the preceding paragraph, the need for fast learning justified the use of continuous, immediate reinforcement. Under more typical circumstances, we would hope that prompt attendance could occur without such close attention.

Behaviour tends to be *persistent* when it is learned under conditions of partial and delayed reinforcement. That is, it will tend to persist under reduced or terminated reinforcement when not every instance of the behaviour is reinforced during learning or when some time period elapses between its enactment and reinforcement. In most cases, the supervisor who wishes to reinforce prompt attendance knows that he will not be able to stand by the shop door every morning to compliment his crew's timely entry. Given this constraint, the supervisor should compliment prompt attendance occasionally, perhaps later in the day. This should increase the persistence of promptness and reduce the employees' reliance on the boss's monitoring.

To repeat, continuous, immediate reinforcement facilitates fast learning, and delayed, partial reinforcement facilitates persistent learning (see Exhibit 2.3). Notice that it is impossible to maximize both speed and persistence with a single reinforcement strategy. Also, many responses in our everyday lives cannot be continuously and immediately reinforced, so in many cases it pays to sacrifice some speed in learning to prepare the learner for this fact of life. All this suggests that managers have to tailor reinforcement strategies to the needs of the situation. Often, managers must alter the strategies over time to achieve effective learning and maintenance of behaviour. For example, the manager training a new employee should probably use a reinforcement strategy that is fairly continuous and immediate (whatever the reinforcer). Looking over the employee's shoulder to obtain the fast acquisition of behaviour is appropriate. Gradually, however, the supervisor should probably reduce the frequency of reinforcement and perhaps build some delay into its presentation to reduce the employee's dependency on his or her attention.

## Reducing the Probability of Behaviour

Thus far in our discussion of learning, we have been interested in *increasing* the probability of various work behaviours, such as attendance or good performance. Both positive and negative reinforcement can accomplish this goal. However, in many cases, we encounter learned behaviours that we wish to *stop* from occurring. Such behaviours are detrimental to the operation of the organization and could be detrimental to the health or safety of an individual employee.

**Exhibit 2.3**  
Summary of reinforcement  
strategies and their effects.



There are two strategies that can reduce the probability of learned behaviour: extinction and punishment.

## Extinction

**Extinction** simply involves terminating the reinforcement that is maintaining some unwanted behaviour. If the behaviour is not reinforced, it will gradually dissipate or be extinguished.

Consider the case of a bright, young marketing expert who was headed for the “fast track” in his organization. Although his boss, the vice-president of marketing, was considering him for promotion, the young expert had developed a very disruptive habit—the tendency to play comedian during department meetings. The vice-president observed that this wisecracking was reinforced by the appreciative laughs of two other department members. He proceeded to enlist their aid to extinguish the joking. After the vice-president explained the problem to them, they agreed to ignore the disruptive one-liners and puns. At the same time, the vice-president took special pains to positively reinforce constructive comments by the young marketer. Very quickly, joking was extinguished, and the young man’s future with the company improved.<sup>44</sup>

This example illustrates that extinction works best when coupled with the reinforcement of some desired substitute behaviour. Remember that behaviours that have been learned under delayed or partial reinforcement schedules are more difficult to extinguish than those learned under continuous, immediate reinforcement. Ironically, it would be harder to extinguish the joke-telling behaviour of a partially successful committee member than of one who was always successful at getting a laugh.

**Extinction.** The gradual dissipation of behaviour following the termination of reinforcement.

## Punishment

**Punishment** involves following an unwanted behaviour with some unpleasant, aversive stimulus. In theory, this should reduce the probability of the response when the actor learns that the behaviour leads to unwanted consequences. Notice the difference between punishment and negative reinforcement. In negative reinforcement a nasty stimulus is *removed* following some behaviour, increasing the probability of that behaviour. With punishment, a nasty stimulus is *applied* after some behaviour, *decreasing* the probability of that behaviour. If a boss criticizes her secretary after seeing the secretary use the office phone for personal calls, we expect to see less of this activity in the future. Exhibit 2.4 compares punishment with reinforcement and extinction.

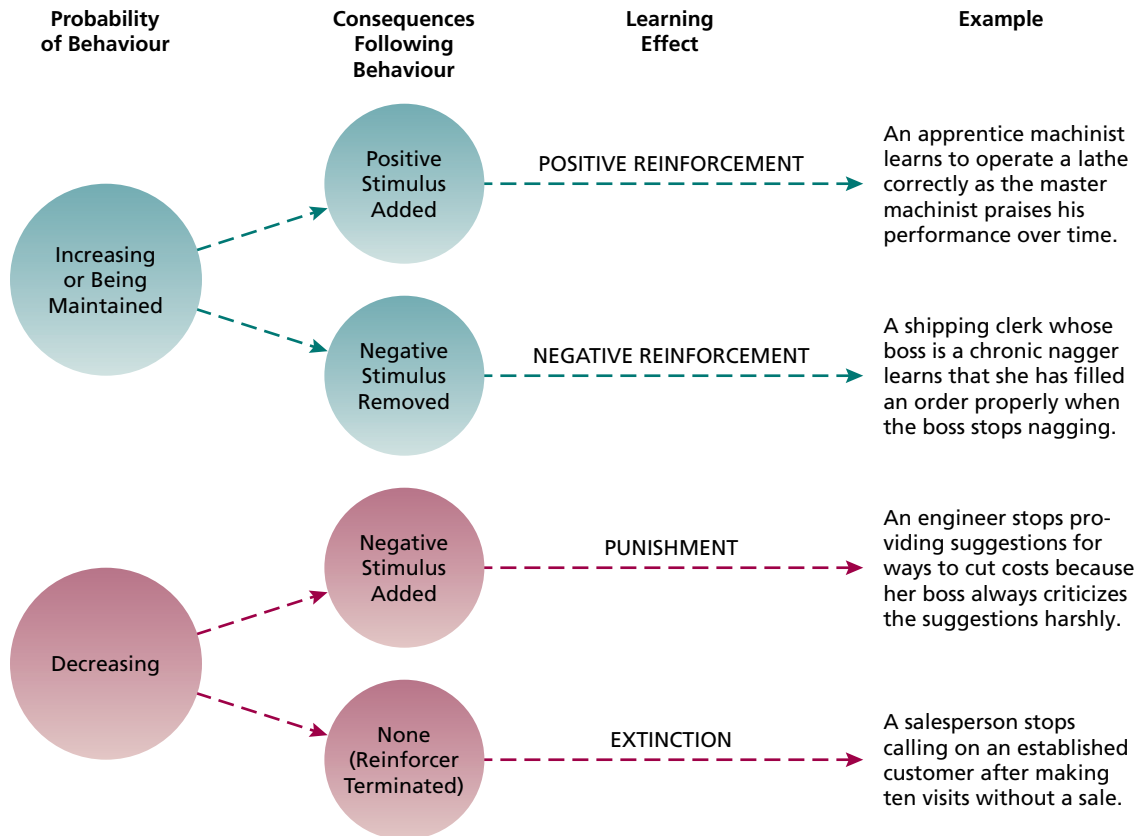
**Punishment.** The application of an aversive stimulus following some behaviour designed to decrease the probability of that behaviour.

## Using Punishment Effectively

In theory, punishment should be useful for eliminating unwanted behaviour. After all, it seems unreasonable to repeat actions that cause us trouble. Unfortunately, punishment has some unique characteristics that often limit its effectiveness in stopping unwanted activity. First of all, while punishment provides a clear signal as to which activities are inappropriate, it does not by itself demonstrate which activities should *replace* the punished response. Reconsider the executive who chastises her secretary for making personal calls at the office. If the secretary makes personal calls only when she has caught up on her work, she might legitimately wonder what she is supposed to be doing during her occasional free time. If the boss fails to provide substitute activities, the message contained in the punishment might be lost.

Both positive and negative reinforcers specify which behaviours are appropriate. Punishment indicates only what is not appropriate. Since no reinforced substitute behaviour is provided, punishment only temporarily suppresses the unwanted response. When surveillance is removed, the response will tend to recur. Constant





**Exhibit 2.4**  
Summary of learning effects.

monitoring is very time consuming, and individuals become amazingly adept at learning when they can get away with the forbidden activity. The secretary will soon learn when she can make personal calls without detection. The moral here is clear: *Provide an acceptable alternative for the punished response.*

A second difficulty with punishment is that it has a tendency to provoke a strong emotional reaction on the part of the punished individual.<sup>45</sup> This is especially likely when the punishment is delivered in anger or perceived to be unfair. Managers who try overly hard to be patient with employees and then finally blow up risk overemotional reactions. So do those who tolerate unwanted behaviour on the part of their employees and then impulsively decide to make an example of one individual by punishing him or her. Managers should be sure that their own emotions are under control before punishing, and they should generally avoid punishment in front of observers.<sup>46</sup> Because of the emotional problems involved in the use of punishment, some organizations have downplayed its use in discipline systems. They give employees who have committed infractions *paid* time off to think about their problems.

In addition to providing correct alternative responses and limiting the emotions involved in punishment, there are several other principles that can increase the effectiveness of punishment.

- *Make sure the chosen punishment is truly aversive.* Organizations frequently “punish” chronically absent employees by making them take several days off work. Managers sometimes “punish” ineffective performers by requiring them to work overtime, which allows them to earn extra pay. In both cases, the presumed punishment might actually act as a positive reinforcer for the unwanted behaviour.

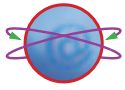
- *Punish immediately.* Managers frequently overlook early instances of rule violations or ineffective performance, hoping that things will “work out.”<sup>47</sup> This only allows these behaviours to gain strength through repetition. If immediate punishment is difficult to apply, the manager should delay action until a more appropriate time and then reinstate the circumstances surrounding the problem behaviour. For example, the bank manager who observes her teller exhibiting inappropriate behaviour might ask this person to remain after work. She should then carry out punishment at the teller’s window rather than in her office, perhaps demonstrating correct procedures and role playing a customer to allow the employee to practise them.
- *Do not reward unwanted behaviours before or after punishment.* Many supervisors join in horseplay with their employees until they feel it is time to get some work done. Then, unexpectedly, they do an about-face and punish those who are still “goofing around.” Sometimes, managers feel guilty about punishing their employees for some rule infraction and then quickly attempt to make up with displays of good-natured sympathy or affection. For example, the boss who criticizes her secretary for personal calls might show up an hour later with a gift of flowers. Such actions present employees with extremely confusing signals about how they should behave, since the manager could be inadvertently reinforcing the very response that he or she wants to terminate.
- *Do not inadvertently punish desirable behaviour.* This happens commonly in organizations. The manager who does not use all his capital budget for a given fiscal year might have the department’s budget for the next year reduced, punishing the prudence of his employees. Government employees who “blow the whistle” on wasteful or inefficient practices might find themselves demoted.<sup>48</sup> University professors who are considered excellent teachers might be assigned to onerous, time-consuming duty on a curriculum committee, cutting into their class preparation time.

In summary, punishment can be an effective means of stopping undesirable behaviour. However, managers must apply it very carefully and deliberately in order to achieve this effectiveness. In general, reinforcing correct behaviours and extinguishing unwanted responses are safer strategies for managers than the frequent use of punishment.

## Social Learning Theory

It has perhaps occurred to you that learning sometimes takes place in organizations without the conscious control of positive and negative reinforcers by managers. For instance, after experiencing just a couple of executive committee meetings, a newly promoted vice-president might look like an “old pro,” bringing appropriate materials to the meeting, asking questions in an approved style, and so on. How can we account for such learning?

Besides directly experiencing consequences, humans also learn by observing the behaviour of others. This form of learning is called “social learning.” Generally, social learning involves examining the behaviour of others, seeing what consequences they experience, and thinking about what might happen if we act the same way. If we expect favourable consequences, we might imitate the behaviour. In training, the rookie salesperson might be required to make calls with a seasoned sales veteran. By simply observing the veteran in action, the rookie will probably acquire considerable skill without yet having personally made a sale. Obviously, operant learning theory and social learning theory complement each other in explaining learning and organizational behaviour.<sup>49</sup>



Albert Bandura and Theory  
[www.ship.edu/~cgboeree/bandura.html](http://www.ship.edu/~cgboeree/bandura.html)

**Modelling.** The process of imitating the behaviour of others.

According to Albert Bandura, who is largely responsible for the development of social learning theory, social learning involves modelling, self-efficacy, and self-management.<sup>50</sup>

## Modelling

**Modelling** is the process of imitating the behaviour of others. With modelling, learning occurs by observing or imagining the behaviour of others, rather than through direct personal experience.<sup>51</sup> Thus, the new vice-president doubtless modelled his or her behaviour on that of the more experienced peers on the executive committee. But has reinforcement occurred here? It is *self-reinforcement* that occurs in the modelling process. For one thing, it is reinforcing to acquire an understanding of others who are viewed positively. In addition, we are able to imagine the reinforcers that the model experiences coming our way when we imitate his or her behaviour. Surely, this is why we imitate the behaviour of sports heroes and entertainers, a fact that advertisers capitalize on when they choose them to endorse products. In any event, modelling is an important aspect of social learning theory.

What kinds of models are likely to provoke the greatest degree of imitation? In general, attractive, credible, competent, high-status people stand a good chance of being imitated. In addition, it is important that the model's behaviour provoke consequences that are seen as positive and successful by the observer. Finally, it helps if the model's behaviour is vivid and memorable—boredom does not make good models.<sup>52</sup> In business schools, it is not unusual to find students who have developed philosophies or approaches that are modelled on credible, successful, high-profile business leaders. Current examples include Microsoft's Bill Gates and Hewlett-Packard's Carly Fiorina, both of whom have been the object of extensive coverage in the business and popular press.

The extent of modelling as a means of learning in organizations suggests that managers should pay more attention to the process. For one thing, managers who operate on a principle of “do as I say, not as I do” will find that what they do is more likely to be imitated, including undesirable behaviours, such as expense account abuse. Also, in the absence of credible management models, workers might imitate dysfunctional peer behaviour if peers meet the criteria for strong models. See “Research Focus: *Modelling Antisocial Behaviour in the Workplace*” for a good example of this. On a more positive note, well-designed performance appraisal and reward systems permit organizations to publicize the kind of organizational behaviour that should be imitated.

## Self-Efficacy

While modelling may have helped the vice-president learn how to behave in an executive committee meeting, you might have wondered what made him so confident. Was he not worried that he would fail and full of self-doubt? Such beliefs are known as self-efficacy. **Self-efficacy** refers to beliefs people have about their ability to successfully perform a specific task. At this point, it is important to note the difference between task-specific self-efficacy and some of the general personality traits discussed earlier in the chapter. In particular, unlike self-esteem and general self-efficacy which are general personality traits, self-efficacy is a task-specific cognitive appraisal of one's ability to perform a task. Thus, it is not a generalized personality trait. Furthermore, people can have different self-efficacy beliefs for each task that they encounter. For example, the vice-president might have strong self-efficacy for conducting an executive committee meeting but low self-efficacy for doing well in a course on organizational behaviour!<sup>53</sup>

Because self-efficacy is a cognitive belief rather than a stable personality trait, it can be changed and modified in response to different sources of information. In addition to the observation of models, self-efficacy is also influenced by one's expe-

**Self-efficacy.** Beliefs people have about their ability to successfully perform a specific task.

## RESEARCH FOCUS

### Modelling Antisocial Behaviour in the Workplace

Recent reports of antisocial behaviour in the workplace, such as sexual harassment, employee theft, insubordination, sabotage, and violence, indicate that it has become a serious problem in organizations. The term “antisocial behaviour” is used to describe a range of negative behaviours, including acts that can cause harm to individuals and the property of organizations. In order to understand and prevent antisocial behaviour in organizations, it is necessary to identify the causes of it. Many people believe that antisocial behaviour is an individual-level phenomenon. In other words, the cause of antisocial behaviour rests primarily within the individual and is due to antisocial predispositions, such as personality traits or characteristics.

However, according to Sandra Robinson and Anne O’Leary-Kelly, antisocial behaviour might also be shaped by the group context in which one works and through social learning. They argue that in group settings individuals observe the behaviour of other group members who serve as role models. If group members serve as models of antisocial behaviour then other group members are likely to exhibit antisocial behaviour. Thus, the antisocial behaviour of individuals might be a result of the antisocial behaviour of other group members and the role-modeling process.

Robinson and O’Leary-Kelly conducted a study to examine how individuals’ antisocial behaviours at

work can be shaped by the antisocial behaviour of co-workers. The study included 35 work groups in 20 different organizations. The results indicated that the antisocial behaviour of a work group was a significant predictor of an individual’s antisocial workplace behaviour. This relationship was strongest in groups in which there was a climate of antisocial behaviour, the longer an individual had been a member of the group, and in groups where group members must rely on each other for task accomplishment. They also found that the likelihood of punishment weakened the relationship between antisocial group behaviour and individual antisocial behaviour.

The results of this study demonstrate that individuals’ antisocial behaviour in the workplace can be shaped, in part, through the process of observation and modelling. As a result, antisocial behaviour in the workplace can become what the authors refer to as “socially contagious.”

Sources: Robinson, S. L., & O’Leary-Kelly, A. M. (1996). Monkey see, monkey do: The role of role models in predicting workplace aggression. *Academy of Management Best Papers Proceedings*, 41, 284–287; Robinson, S. L., & O’Leary-Kelly, A. M. (1998). Monkey see, monkey do: The influence of work groups on the antisocial behavior of employees. *Academy of Management Journal*, 41, 658–672.; Goulet, L. R. (1997). Modelling aggression in the workplace: The role of role models. *Academy of Management Executive*, 11, 84–85.

riences and success performing the task in question, the verbal persuasion and social influence of others, and one’s physiological or emotional state. Thus, the self-efficacy of the vice-president could have been strengthened by observing the behaviour of others during meetings, encouragement from peers that he would do a great job, and perhaps by his own sense of comfort and relaxation rather than anxiety and stress while attending meetings. Finally, his mastery displayed during the meeting is likely to further strengthen his self-efficacy.

Self-efficacy is a critical component of behaviour that can influence the activities people choose to perform, the amount of effort and persistence devoted to a task, affective and stress reactions, and job performance.<sup>54</sup> In the case of the vice-president, his strong sense of self-efficacy obviously contributed to his ability to perform like an “old pro” at the meeting.

## Self-Management

In much of this chapter, we have been concerned with how organizations and individual managers can use learning principles to manage the behaviour of organizational members. However, according to social learning theory, employees can use learning principles to manage their *own* behaviour, making external control less necessary. This process is called **self-management**.<sup>55</sup>

**Self-management.** The use of learning principles to manage one’s own behaviour.

How can self-management occur? You will recall that modelling involved factors such as observation, imagination, imitation, and self-reinforcement. Individuals can use these and similar techniques in an intentional way to control their own behaviour. The basic process involves observing one's own behaviour, comparing the behaviour with a standard, and rewarding oneself if the behaviour meets the standard.<sup>56</sup>

To illustrate some specific self-management techniques, consider the executive who finds that he is taking too much work home to do in the evenings and over weekends. While his peers seem to have most evenings and weekends free, his own family is ready to disown him due to lack of attention! What can he do?<sup>57</sup>

- *Collect self-observation data.* This involves collecting objective data about one's own behaviour. For example, the executive might keep a log of phone calls and other interruptions for a few days if he suspects that these contribute to his inefficiency.
- *Observe models.* The executive might examine the time-management skills of his peers to find someone successful to imitate.
- *Set goals.* The executive might set specific short-term goals to reduce telephone interruptions and unscheduled personal visits, enlisting the aid of his secretary and using self-observation data to monitor his progress. Longer-term goals might involve four free nights a week and no more than four hours of work on weekends.
- *Rehearse.* The executive might anticipate that he will have to educate his co-workers about his reduced availability. So as not to offend them, he might practise explaining the reason for his revised accessibility.
- *Reinforce oneself.* The executive might promise himself a weekend at the beach with his family the first time he gets his take-home workload down to his target level.

Research has found that self-management can improve learning and result in a change in behaviour. For example, one study showed how a self-management program was used to improve work attendance among unionized maintenance employees. Those who had used over half their sick leave were invited by the human resource department to participate in an eight-week program with the following features:

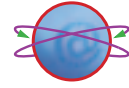
- Discussion of general reasons for use of sick leave. High on the list were transportation problems, family difficulties, and problems with supervisors and co-workers.
- Self-assessment of personal reasons for absence and development of personal coping strategies.
- Goal setting to engage in behaviours that should improve attendance (short-term goals) and to improve attendance by a specific amount (long-term goal).
- Self-observation using charts and diaries. Employees recorded their own attendance, reasons for missing work, and steps they took to get to work.
- Identification of specific reinforcers and punishers to be self-administered for reaching or not reaching goals.

Compared with a group of employees who did not attend the program, the employees who were exposed to the program achieved a significant improvement in attendance, and they also felt more confident (i.e., higher self-efficacy) that they would be able to come to work when confronted with various obstacles to attendance.<sup>58</sup> Self-management programs are frequently successful in positively changing work behaviour and are an effective method of training and learning. In another study, training in self-management was found to significantly improve the sales performance of a sample of insurance salespeople.<sup>59</sup>



## Organizational Learning Practices

We began our discussion of learning by describing learning content, and then we focused on how people learn. In this final section, we review a number of organizational learning practices, including an application of operant learning called organizational behaviour modification, employee recognition programs, training and formal learning, informal learning, and career development. Before continuing, consider “You be the Manager: *Safety Is First at Georgia-Pacific*” for a good example of the application of learning theory and principles.

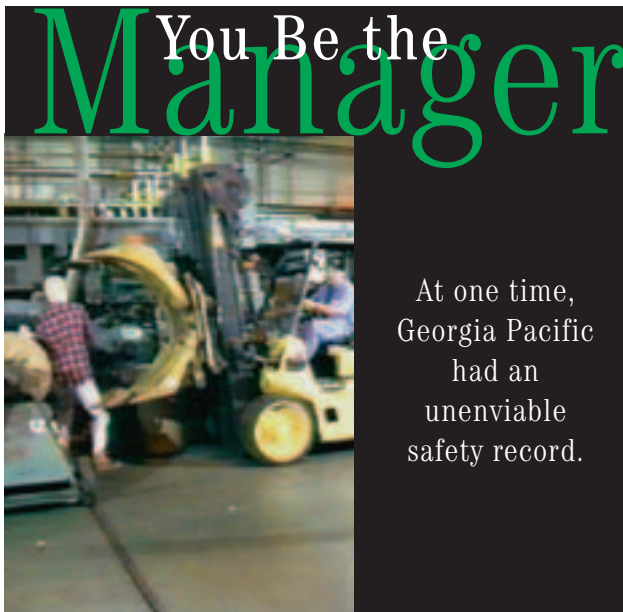


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### Organizational Behaviour Modification

Most reinforcement occurs naturally, rather than as the result of a conscious attempt to manage behaviour. **Organizational behaviour modification (O.B. Mod.)** involves the systematic use of learning principles to influence organizational behaviour. For example, consider how one company used organizational behaviour

**Organizational behaviour modification.** The systematic use of learning principles to influence organizational behaviour.



### Safety Is First at Georgia-Pacific

easy to fix. However, most mistakes in any industry are not caused by the nature of the equipment itself—such as the 55-inch knife blade that, whirling like a giant’s pencil sharpener, peels a 30-year-old tree down to thin air in just eight seconds. Rather, the trouble comes from people’s attitudes and behaviour—for instance, hauling that blade around without wearing protective gloves or trying to clean it while it is running. Workers routinely attempted both procedures in the past, often with bloody results.

Georgia-Pacific people are a little sheepish when they talk about it now, but a macho factor operated in the past as well. Before 1990, workers whose parents and grandparents had toiled in the same mills and factories sometimes took deadly chances as a way of proving their mettle. The biggest challenge, therefore, was to change people’s old habits and assumptions. But how? You be the manager.

The forest-products business is definitely not about glamour. Paper mills, sawmills, and plywood factories are dangerous places, full of constant deafening noise, gargantuan razor-toothed blades, long chutes loaded with rumbling tons of lumber, and giant vats full of boiling water and caustic chemicals under tons of pressure. People working around all that stuff tend to sweat a lot.

People used to bleed a lot, too. At one time, the 241 plants and mills operated by Georgia-Pacific, the Atlanta-based forest products giant with \$13 billion in annual revenues and more than 47,000 employees, had an unenviable safety record, pretty bad even for a notoriously hazardous industry. There were nine serious injuries per 100 employees each year, and 26 workers had lost their lives on the job between 1986 and 1990.

If the cause of these accidents and injuries was the equipment, then the problem would have been

### Questions

1. What are some learning practices that Georgia-Pacific might use to change employees’ attitudes and behaviour toward workplace safety?
2. What effect might changing employees’ behaviour have on safety at Georgia-Pacific?

To find out what Georgia-Pacific did and the effect it had on its safety record, see *The Manager’s Notebook*.

Source: From Fisher, Ann (1997, September 8). Danger zone. *Fortune* 9, pp. 165–167. © Time Inc. Reprinted by permission.

modification through the reinforcement of safe working behaviour in a food-manufacturing plant. At first glance, accidents appeared to be chance events or wholly under the control of factors such as equipment failures. However, the researchers felt that accidents could be reduced if specific safe working practices could be identified and reinforced. These practices were identified with the help of past accident reports and advice from supervisors. Systematic observation of working behaviour indicated that employees followed safe practices only about 74 percent of the time. A brief slide show was prepared to illustrate safe versus unsafe job behaviours. Then, two reinforcers of safe practices were introduced into the workplace. The first consisted of a feedback chart that was conspicuously posted in the workplace to indicate the percentage of safe behaviours observers noted. This chart included the percentages achieved in observational sessions before the slide show, as well as those achieved every three days after the slide show. A second source of reinforcement was supervisors who were encouraged to praise instances of safe performance that they observed. These interventions were successful in raising the percentage of safe working practices to around 97 percent almost immediately. When the reinforcers were terminated, the percentage of safe practices quickly returned to the level before the reinforcement was introduced. (See Exhibit 2.5.)<sup>60</sup>

In general, research supports the effectiveness of organizational behaviour modification programs. In addition to improvements in safety, O.B. Mod has also been found to have a positive effect on improving work attendance and task performance. The effects on task performance, however, tend to be stronger in manufacturing than in service organizations. As well, money, feedback, and social recognition have all been found to be effective forms of positive reinforcement and the use of all three together has the strongest effect on task performance.<sup>61</sup>

## Employee Recognition Programs

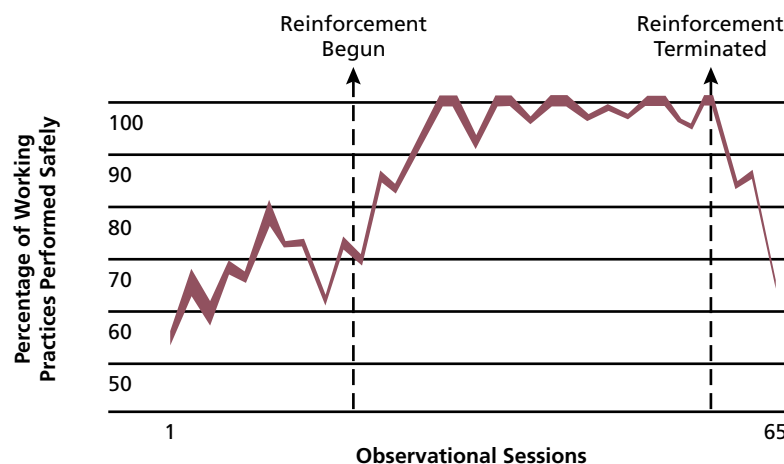
### Employee recognition programs.

Formal organizational programs that publicly recognize and reward employees for specific behaviours.

Another example of an organizational learning practice that uses positive reinforcement is employee recognition programs. **Employee recognition programs** are formal organizational programs that publicly recognize and reward employees for specific behaviours. To be effective, a formal employee recognition program must specify (a) how a person will be recognized, (b) the type of behaviour being encouraged, (c) the manner of the public acknowledgement, and (d) a token or icon of the event for the recipient. A key part of an employee recognition program is public acknowledgement. Thus, a financial reward for good performance would not qualify as an employee recognition program if it was not accompanied by some form of public praise and recognition.<sup>62</sup>

**Exhibit 2.5**  
Percentage of safe working practices achieved with and without reinforcement.

Source: Adapted from Komaki, J., et al. (1978, August). A behavioral approach to occupational safety: Pinpointing and reinforcing safe performance in a food manufacturing plant. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 63(4), 439. Copyright © 1978 by American Psychological Association. Adapted by permission.

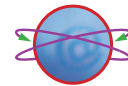


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Many of the best companies to work for in Canada have employee recognition programs that publicly recognize and reward employees for their contributions and accomplishments.

Employee recognition programs have been found to be related to a number of individual and organizational outcomes including job satisfaction, performance and productivity, and lower turnover.<sup>63</sup> One study compared a public recognition program for improving work attendance with several other interventions. Employees with perfect attendance for an entire month had their names posted with a gold star for that month. At the end of each quarter, employees with no more than two absences received a personal card notifying and congratulating them. In addition, at the end of the year there was a plant-wide meeting to recognize good attendance and small, engraved mementos were awarded to employees who had perfect attendance during the entire year. The results indicated that employees had favourable perceptions of the program and the program resulted in a decrease in absenteeism.<sup>64</sup>

Many of the best companies to work for in Canada have some form of employee recognition program. In fact, 61 percent of employees in the 50 best companies to work for in Canada believe that they receive adequate recognition beyond compensation for their contributions and accomplishments. At Canadian Tire for example, the head office has a Wall of Winners which displays photographs of exceptional customer service. At Fidelity Investments Canada Ltd., up to five employees are honoured each quarter for outstanding performance. They receive \$500, a letter of recognition and a lunch. Once a year the “best of the best” receives \$1,000. Toronto-based pharmaceutical company Janssen-Ortho recognizes top performers with peer-chosen bronze, silver, and gold Medallion Awards.<sup>65</sup>



Canadian Tire  
[www.canadiantire.ca](http://www.canadiantire.ca)

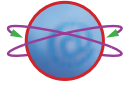
Fidelity Investments Canada  
[www.fidelity.ca](http://www.fidelity.ca)

## Training and Formal Learning

Training is one of the most common types of formal learning in organizations. **Training** refers to planned organizational activities that are designed to facilitate knowledge and skill acquisition in order to change behaviour and improve performance.<sup>66</sup> Employees learn a variety of skills by attending formal training programs. In addition to teaching employees technical skills required to perform their jobs, training programs also teach employees nontechnical skills such as how to work in teams, how to provide excellent customer service, and ways to understand and appreciate cultural diversity.

Effective training programs include many of the principles of learning described earlier in the chapter, such as positive reinforcement, feedback, learning by observation, strengthening employees' self-efficacy, and self-management. Research on

**Training.** Planned organizational activities that are designed to facilitate knowledge and skill acquisition in order to change behaviour and improve performance.



Scotiabank  
www.scotiabank.com

Labatt Brewing Co. Ltd.  
www.labatt.com

**Informal learning.** Learning experiences that are not planned and designed by the organization.

training has found that self-efficacy is a particularly important factor in a training program's effectiveness.<sup>67</sup>

Many companies, such as Motorola, invest heavily in training, and some have a policy of guaranteeing employees a certain number of hours of training each year. The Bank of Montreal built a \$50 million learning centre called the Institute for Learning and now provides employees about three times the national average of training hours.<sup>68</sup> Scotiabank invests \$47-million a year in employee training and offers employees tuition assistance, language training, and online programs for upgrading their skills. In addition, managers receive training in leadership skills and coaching techniques. At Labatt Brewing Co. Ltd. employees attend beer school to learn about how beer is made and to gain a greater knowledge and appreciation of the company's products.<sup>69</sup>

## Informal Learning

**Informal learning** refers to learning experiences that are not planned and designed by the organization. As a result, informal learning tends to be more spontaneous, immediate, and task specific than formal learning. Examples of informal learning include a senior employee showing a new employee how to use a machine, meetings in which team members discuss how to solve work problems, observation of peers and supervisors, receiving and giving feedback, and exchanges during shift changes.<sup>70</sup> It is reported that up to 70 percent of learning in organizations takes place informally.<sup>71</sup>

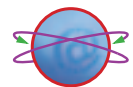
Informal learning is important because it contributes to learning in all four of the content areas described earlier in the chapter and it is positively related to performance. Informal learning also reinforces formal learning.<sup>72</sup> At Motorola, for example, workers and supervisors update workers on the next shift on problems and discuss probable causes and solutions, and work teams modify work processes when they learn new and better ways of doing their work.

Although by definition informal learning is not planned by organizations, organizations can be active in creating an environment to stimulate informal learning by ensuring that employees have many opportunities to communicate and interact with each other and to observe each other at work.

## Career Development

While formal and informal learning can help employees learn to perform their current jobs more effectively, career development helps employees prepare for future roles and responsibilities. **Career development** is an ongoing process in which individuals progress through a series of stages that consist of a unique set of issues, themes, and tasks. This usually involves a career planning and career management component. Career planning involves the assessment of an individual's interests, skills, and abilities in order to develop goals and career plans. Career management involves taking the necessary steps that are required to achieve an individual's goals and career plans. This often involves special assignments and activities that are designed to assist employees in their career development.<sup>73</sup>

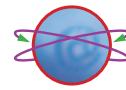
Given the increasing emphasis and importance of continuous and life-long learning, many organizations now have career development programs. For example, Dun & Bradstreet Canada, a business information services company, has a career development program for all of its 330 employees. Employees have a file called a Leadership Action Plan that lists their strengths and career aspirations as well as a plan on how they will achieve their goals. The file is reviewed by a supervisor four times a year. In addition, an intranet site is available to help employees perform career assessments and access information about job opportunities within the company. The company believes that its career development program will provide it with a learning, knowledge, and skills advantage.<sup>74</sup>



Dun & Bradstreet Canada  
www.dnb.ca

**Career development.** An ongoing process in which individuals progress through a series of stages that consist of a unique set of issues, themes, and tasks.

Pratt & Whitney Canada Corp. has a career development program that includes an intranet site to educate employees about the company's career services and opportunities. Delta Hotels and Resorts Ltd. offers employees a variety of career planning resources, and all employees receive a career workbook to assist them in their career planning. In addition, managers attend a career planning workshop where they learn how to discuss advancement and skills development with their employees.<sup>75</sup> At Maritime Life Assurance Co. in Halifax, one of the employee benefits is a Career Investment Account. Employees receive an annual stipend that they can use to purchase career development materials.<sup>76</sup>



Delta Hotels and Resorts Ltd.  
www.deltahotels.com

## the manager's Notebook

### Safety Is First at Georgia-Pacific

1. The work at Georgia-Pacific has not changed, but the way people think about it and do it has, thanks to a safety program that includes formal training, safety meetings, videotapes, rewards, and a work environment that constantly reinforces workplace safety. In addition to formal training sessions and weekly safety meetings at all its plants, Georgia-Pacific constantly hammers home its "safety first" message. Thus, one of the most important things that Georgia-Pacific did was to create a work environment that reinforces the importance of safety. Exhortations about safety turn up on every available surface, in the form of posters, stickers (often on hard-hats), buttons, T-shirts, and jackets. At division meetings, internal memos, and management speeches, the first thing on the agenda is always safety. The company's TV network and videos are also used to teach safety behaviour. The SafeTV network beams question-and-answer sessions via satellite to about 350 Georgia-Pacific sites around the United States. It also produces and distributes documentary videos for use in safety meetings at the plants. Success stories describe near misses and ways of avoiding accidents, such as how not to get crushed by a 2,800-pound lift truck. Near-miss reports are also written out on index cards, faxed all over the company, and posted on bulletin boards just inside plant entrances. Georgia-Pacific also uses rewards and positive reinforcement to reinforce safety. Supervisors and managers are evaluated, and compensated, on the basis of how they do in
- four areas. Safety—formerly an afterthought, with no impact on paycheques—is now one of the four and carries the same weight as production. To reinforce employee safety behaviour, every plant keeps track of how many consecutive hours it has functioned without an injury, and those figures are posted at plant entrances and widely publicized elsewhere. Punishment has also been used—workers have been fired for ignoring safety rules.
2. The effects of Georgia-Pacific's safety program have been dramatic—accidents have declined and productivity has increased. For several years running, it has recorded the best safety record in the industry, and its sawmills are now about 70 percent safer than the industry average. In a one-year period, 80 percent of its plants operated without any injuries at all. Best of all, nobody died anywhere. The company's mill in Brunswick, GA, a vast, hot, clamorous place that produces more fluff pulp (the stuff in disposable diapers, among other things) than anywhere else in the world, now records injuries of 0.7 per 100 workers annually. This is about one-third the injury rate at the average bank where the scariest piece of machinery is most likely the photocopier. Georgia-Pacific's safety crusade has worked so well that the company has begun applying the same principles to improving other areas of its business, including quality and customer service.

Source: From Fisher, Ann (1997, September 8). Danger zone. *Fortune* 9, pp. 165–167. © Time Inc. Reprinted by permission.



## Learning Objectives Checklist

1. *Personality* is the relatively stable set of psychological characteristics that influences the way that we interact with our environment. It has more impact on behaviour in weak situations than in strong situations.
2. According to the dispositional approach, stable individual characteristics influence people's attitudes and behaviours. The situational approach argues that characteristics in the work environment influence people's attitudes and behaviour. The interactionist approach posits that organizational behaviour is a function of both dispositions and the situation.
3. Research reveals that there are five basic dimensions to personality: extraversion, emotional stability, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience. Research has found that the "Big Five" are related to motivation, job satisfaction, job performance, and career outcomes.
4. People who have an *internal locus of control* are more satisfied with their jobs, earn more money, and achieve higher organizational positions. High *self-monitors* have good communication skills and persuasive abilities and are more likely to change employers and locations and to receive more promotions than individuals who are low self-monitors. People with high *self-esteem* tend to make more fulfilling career decisions, to exhibit higher job satisfaction and job performance, and to be generally more resilient to the strains of everyday worklife.
5. Recent developments in personality research have shown that *positive* and *negative affectivity*, *proactive personality*, *general self-efficacy*, and *core self-evaluations* are related to job attitudes and work behaviour.
6. *Learning* occurs when practice or experience leads to a relatively permanent change in behaviour potential. The content of learning in organizations consists of practical, intrapersonal, and interpersonal skills and cultural awareness.
7. *Operant learning* occurs as a function of the consequences of behaviour. If some behaviour is occurring regularly or increasing in probability, you can assume that it is being reinforced. If the reinforcer is added to the situation following the behaviour, it is a *positive reinforcer*. If the reinforcer is removed from the situation following the behaviour, it is a *negative reinforcer*.
8. Behaviour is learned quickly when it is reinforced immediately and continuously. Behaviour tends to be persistent under reduced or terminated reinforcement when it is learned under conditions of delayed and/or partial reinforcement.
9. If some behaviour decreases in probability, you can assume that it is being either extinguished or punished. If the behaviour is followed by no observable consequence, it is being extinguished, that is, some reinforcer that was maintaining the behaviour has been terminated. If the behaviour is followed by the application of some unpleasant consequence, it is being punished.
10. Social learning theory involves modelling, self-efficacy, and self-management. *Modelling* is the process of imitating others. Models are most likely to be imitated when they are high in status, attractive, competent, credible, successful, and vivid. *Self-efficacy* is the belief that one can successfully perform a specific task and is influenced by performance on the task, observation of others performing the task, verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal. *Self-management* occurs when people use learning principles to manage their own behaviour, thus reducing the need for external control. Aspects of self-management include collecting self-observation data, observing models, goal setting, rehearsing, and using self-reinforcement.
11. Organizational learning practices include organizational behaviour modification, employee recognition programs, training, informal learning, and career development. *Organizational behaviour modification* is the systematic use of learning principles to influence organizational behaviour. Companies have successfully used it to improve employees' attendance, task performance, and workplace safety. *Employee recognition programs* are formal organizational programs that publicly recognize and reward employees for specific behaviours. *Training* involves planned organizational activities that are designed to facilitate knowledge and skill acquisition in order to change behaviour and improve performance. *Informal learning* refers to learning experiences that are not planned and designed by the organization, and *career development* is an ongoing process in which individuals progress through a series of stages that consist of a unique set of issues, themes, and tasks.

## Discussion Questions

1. Consider the relevance of the dispositional, situational, and interactionist approaches to your own behaviour. Describe examples of your behaviour in a school or work situation that demonstrates each perspective of organizational behaviour.
2. Suppose that you are the manager of two employees, one of whom has an internal locus of control and another who has an external locus of control. Describe the leadership tactics that you would use with each employee. Contrast the management styles that you would employ for employees with high versus low self-esteem.
3. Consider some examples of behaviour that you repeat fairly regularly (such as studying or going to work every morning). What are the positive and negative reinforcers that maintain this behaviour?
4. We pointed out that managers frequently resort to punishing ineffective behaviour. What are some of the practical demands of the typical manager's job that lead to this state of affairs?
5. Discuss a situation that you have observed in which the use of punishment was ineffective in terminating some unwanted behaviour. Why was punishment ineffective in this case?
6. Describe a situation in which you think an employer could use organizational behaviour modification and an employee recognition program to improve or correct employee behaviour. Can you anticipate any dangers in using these approaches?
7. A supervisor in a textile factory observes that one of her employees is violating a safety rule that could result in severe injury. What combination of reinforcement, punishment, extinction, and social learning could she use to correct this behaviour?
8. Describe a job in which you think an employee recognition program might be an effective means for changing and improving employee behaviour. Explain how you would design the program and how principles from operant learning theory and social learning theory could be used.

## Integrative Discussion Questions

1. Refer to the material in Chapter 1 on Mintzberg's managerial roles and consider how personality might be a factor in how effectively a manager performs each role. Discuss the relationship among the Big Five personality dimensions, locus of control, self-monitoring, self-esteem, proactive personality,

and general self-efficacy, with each of the managerial roles.

2. Discuss how each of the organizational learning practices discussed in the chapter can be used by organizations to deal effectively with the contemporary management concerns discussed in Chapter 1 (i.e., Diversity—Local and Global, Employee-Organization Relationships, Quality, Speed, and Flexibility, and Employee Recruitment and Retention).

## Experiential Exercise

### Proactive Personality Scale

Do you have a proactive personality? To find out, answer the 17 questions below as frankly and honestly as possible using the following response scale:

- |                             |                    |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| 1—Disagree very much        | 5—Agree slightly   |
| 2—Disagree moderately       | 6—Agree moderately |
| 3—Disagree slightly         | 7—Agree very much  |
| 4—Neither agree or disagree |                    |

- \_\_\_ 1. I am constantly on the lookout for new ways to improve my life.
- \_\_\_ 2. I feel driven to make a difference in my community, and maybe the world.
- \_\_\_ 3. I tend to let others take the initiative to start new projects.
- \_\_\_ 4. Wherever I have been, I have been a powerful force for constructive change.
- \_\_\_ 5. I enjoy facing and overcoming obstacles to my ideas.
- \_\_\_ 6. Nothing is more exciting than seeing my ideas turn into reality.
- \_\_\_ 7. If I see something I don't like, I fix it.
- \_\_\_ 8. No matter what the odds, if I believe in something I will make it happen.
- \_\_\_ 9. I love being a champion for my ideas, even against others' opposition.
- \_\_\_ 10. I excel at identifying opportunities.
- \_\_\_ 11. I am always looking for better ways to do things.
- \_\_\_ 12. If I believe in an idea, no obstacle will prevent me from making it happen.
- \_\_\_ 13. I love to challenge the *status quo*.

- \_\_\_ 14. When I have a problem, I tackle it head-on.
- \_\_\_ 15. I am great at turning problems into opportunities.
- \_\_\_ 16. I can spot a good opportunity long before others can.
- \_\_\_ 17. If I see someone in trouble, I help out in any way I can.

### Scoring and Interpretation

You have just completed the Proactive Personality Scale developed by Thomas Bateman and J. Michael Crant. To score your scale, first subtract your response to question 3 from 8. For example, if you gave a response of 7 to question 3, give yourself a 1 (8 minus 7). Then add up your scores to all 17 items. Your total should be somewhere between 17 and 119. The higher your score, the more *proactive* your personality is—you feel that you can change things in your environment.

The average score of 134 first-year M.B.A. students with full-time work experience was 90.7. Thus, these people tended to see themselves as very proactive. In this research, people with a proactive personality tended to report more extracurricular and service activities and major personal achievements that involve constructive environmental change.

Source: Bateman, T. S., & Crant, J. M. (1993). The proactive component of organizational behavior: A measure and correlates. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 14, 103–118. © 1993 John Wiley & Sons Limited. Reprinted with permission.

## Case Incident

### Courier Cats

In order to stay competitive, many organizations have to regularly upgrade their computer technology. This was certainly

the case for Courier Cats, a small but profitable courier firm. In order to improve the delivery and tracking of parcels, the company decided to invest in a new software program. It was expected that the new software would not only allow the company to expand its business, but would also improve the quality of service. Because the new software was much more complex and sophisticated than what the company had been using, employees attended a one-day seminar to learn how to use the new system. However, six months after the system was implemented, most employees were still using the old system. Some employees refused to use the new software, while others did not think they would ever be able to learn how to use it.

1. Why do you think that the employees did not use the new software?
2. What are some of the implications that stem from operant learning theory and social learning theory for increasing the probability that the employees will use the new software? What do you recommend for improving the use of the new software?

## Case Study

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